



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/560,901	12/16/2005	Hamid Sharim	27129U	2430
20529	7590	10/17/2007		
NATH & ASSOCIATES 112 South West Street Alexandria, VA 22314			EXAMINER WISTERMAYER, ALEXIS M	
			ART UNIT 4134	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 10/17/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/560,901

Applicant(s)

SHARIM, HAMID

Examiner

Alexis M. Wistermayer

Art Unit

3709

4/34

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 December 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 7-6-2006.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because they are drawn to non-statutory subject matter. In claim 1, lines 8-9, applicant positively recites part of a human, i.e. "two of said three points of contact (with said curved surface of bone)". Thus claims 1-18 include a human within their scope and are non-statutory. This rejection may be overcome by referring to the surface of the bone in purely functional terms.

A claim directed to or including within its scope a human is not considered to be patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The grant of a limited, but exclusive property right in a human being is prohibited by the Constitution. In re Wakefield, 422 F.2d 897, 164 USPQ 636 (CCPA 1970).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3 and 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Brace et al (US Pat 6235033).

Regarding Claim 1: Brace et al. teach a saddle clamp/bone fixation assembly having a rigid body having a contact surface (Figure 1 Element 10) with at least two holes (Figure 3 Element 24, shown as at least two holes in Figure 2), at least one assembly element (Figure 12 Element 34) with at least two of said holes passing through said contact surface (Figure 1).

Regarding Claim 2: Brace et al. teach a device where the axes of two of said holes converge towards said bone (Figure 2).

Regarding Claim 3: Brace et al. teach an assembly element that is a threaded pin protruding from said rigid body (Figure 6 Element 34).

Regarding Claims 5 and 7: Brace et al. teach a device having a saddle shaped surface and a second surface (Figure 2) with first and second passing holes.

Regarding Claims 6 and 8: Brace et al. teach a contact surface and a second surface being an arcuate surface (Figure 2) and at least two holes are directed perpendicular to the bone's axes (Figure 6).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

Art Unit: 4134

invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al (US Pat 6235033) as set forth regarding claims 1-3 and 5-8 and further in view of Dixon et al (US PGPub 2003/0135210).

Regarding Claim 4: Brace et al. teaches the basic claimed device as set forth in the rejections above. Brace et al. does not teach an assembly element that is a threaded nut. Dixon et al. teach an assembly element that is a threaded nut built into said rigid body (Paragraph 42). Brace et al. and Dixon et al. are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor of spinal stabilization devices. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use Dixon et al.'s nut in Brace et al.'s device. The motivation would have been to offer an equivalent and alternative means of securing the device to the bone.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al (UP Pat 6235033).

Brace et al. teach the basic claimed device as set forth above regarding claim 1 and claim 8.

Brace et al. teach a device where holes would be drilled into the bone (at a surgeon-selected orientation Column 2 Lines 40 through 60) in order to secure the fixation device to said bone, indicating that there could be an intersection of the axes.

Art Unit: 4134

Brace et al. does not teach an intersection of the axes occurring at an angle between 45 and 60 degrees. See MPEP 2144.05 Section II B. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use this range in angular degrees, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art.

Claims 10 – 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al (US Pat 6235033) as set forth above regarding claims 1-3 and 5-8 and further in view of Dixon et al (US PGPub 2003/0135210) as applied to Claim 1 above.

Regarding Claims 10 and 11: Brace et al. does not teach a method for mounting the saddle clamp to the bone. Dixon et al. discloses a method providing a saddle clamp/stabilizer having a contact surface and holes for said bone (Figure 1), fixing elements (Figure 1 Elements 40 and 47), exposing a suitable area of said bone (which is well known in the art if a surgeon is to perform an invasive surgery like this), drilling holes in said bone (Paragraph 75), and mounting said device on said bone (Paragraph 75). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use Dixon et al.'s method with Brace et al.'s device. The motivation would have been to offer an equivalent and alternative means of securing the device to the bone.

Regarding Claim 12: Brace et al. teach the basic claimed device as set forth in the rejections above. Brace et al. teach vertebrae, which are substantially tubular

Art Unit: 4134

bones, since the spinal cord runs through them, and a device that can be attached to the vertebrae (Figure 12). Anything being fixated to the vertebral body will essentially be perpendicular to the axis, which runs parallel to the spinal cord.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al (US Pat 6235033) in view of Dixon et al. (US PGPub 2003/0135210) as set forth above regarding claims 10 and 11 and further in view of Itoman et al (US Pat 5665086) as applied to claim 10 above.

Regarding Claim 13: Brace et al. does not teach an intersection of the axes of the holes in the tubular bone occurring at an angle between 45 and 60 degrees. See MPEP 2144.05 Section II B. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use this range in angular degrees, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art.

Claims 14-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al. (US Pat 6235033) in view of Dixon et al. (US PGPub 2003/0135210) as applied to Claim 10 above, further in view of Bryan (US Pat 5306275).

Regarding Claims 14, 17, and 18: Brace et al. teach a similar device as explained in the rejections above. Brace et al. does not teach a method including a saddle clamp with a saddle surface, a second surface, a first and second passing holes, and fixing elements that are screws. Bryan teaches a method including a saddle clamp/hook (Figure 1 Element 14), a second surface (Figure 1 Element 12), first and second passing holes (Elements 80a and 80b), fixing elements (Figure 1 Element 20) that are screws, drilling pilot holes in the vertebrae corresponding to said passing holes (Column 14 Lines 45 through 55) and mounting the clamp on the vertebrae (Column 15 Lines 25 through 40). Brace et al. and Bryan are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor of spinal stabilization devices. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use Bryan's method for Brace et al.'s device. The motivation would have been to offer an alternative and equivalent means of securing the device to the bone.

Regarding Claim 15: Brace et al. does not teach a method where the second surface of the clamp is an arcuate surface. Bryan teaches a method where the second surface of the clamp is an arcuate surface (Figure 1). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use Bryan's surface shape in Brace et al.'s device. The motivation would have been to offer an equivalent and alternative means of securing the device to the bone.

Regarding Claim 16: Brace et al. does not teach a method of adjusting the surface of the vertebrae. Bryan teaches a method of cutting away bone (Column 14 Lines 40 through 50). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a



Art Unit: 4134

person of ordinary skill in the art to use Bryan's method with Brace et al.'s device. The motivation would have been to offer an equivalent and alternative means of securing the device to the bone.

### ***Correspondence***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexis M. Wistermayer whose telephone number is 571-272-1197. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8 am - 4 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark Eashoo can be reached on 571-272-1197. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Art Unit: 4134

AMW

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Eashoo', with a stylized, flowing script.

MARK EASHOO, PH.D.  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

15/Oct/07